659 [805] **112. Accuracy of the Age-return.**—Of all the questions asked for the purpose of filling in the Census Schedules, that pertaining to age is generally attended with dubious results. The ordinary villager who has received practically no education is not only ignorant of his actual age but on account of traditional reticence he would not give away his correct age to any outsider even if he knew it. There is a tendency to declare a higher age than he has actually reached. The timely issue of printed circulars and verbal instructions to the Census agency enjoining upon them the necessity of exercising a strict and careful check on the entries of age column went a long way in securing a reliable return of age but still the mistakes which are inherent in this enquiry may have played their part though to a smaller extent. It is accordingly not possible to assert that the returns of age have reached the ideal accuracy which must undoubtedly elude the grasp of many a Census till the percentage of literacy of the rural population is considerably increased and the wholesome effects of widespread education and enlightenment have broken the weakening cords of superstition and traditional reticence of the masses who at present do not fully realise the value of the Census statistics. The principal causes responsible for inaccuracy of the age-return have already received sufficient comment in the previous Census Reports but to enable the reader to correctly appraise the figures it is essential to review them briefly here also.

802 1. An average person shows a special preference for stating his age in numbers which end in zero or which are multiples of 5 and it is rare that he states the intervening numbers unless he is challenged or persistently interrogated. There is a further preference for even over odd numbers.

2. No accurate distinction is made in their minds by people in giving the ages of children; and children from two months upto two years or over may be inadvertently clubbed together in the category of 0-1 age-period.

• 581 3. Amongst the Hindu parents there is a strong proclivity to underrate the age of unmarried girls for fear of social obloquy, while on the other hand there is some overstatement in the ages of young boys who are pushed into premature manhood.

4. In middle-life, the understatement is greater in case of males than the females since amidst the former there is a large number of bachelors or widowers who can best promote their object of securing wives by appearing of a younger age while the latter who are generally married do not stand to gain much by the lie.

562 5. The tendency so marked amongst the Western women to understate their age, does not find much favour among the Indian women who on account of social restrictions such as *Purdah* system etc., have little chance to move out in society and consequently feel little temptation towards understatement.

888 6. The tendency to materially exaggerate their age amongst the old people is very common in India and any old man after he has crossed eighty is apt to declare himself a centenarian, and it is not unlikely that to inspire belief in others he relates old incidents which he proudly states as having occurred and been seen by him when he was a boy.

805 562 7. Another element of error is introduced by the fact that the enumerator has to make enquiries from the head of the family who has to answer questions not only for himself but also for dependent residents. He might remember with somewhat exactness the ages of his sons but the ages of women who observe *purdah* can only be roughly declared by him and it should be no surprise if sometimes the error of 5 years or even a decade creeps in.

659 The inaccuracies due to the above factors were partly guarded against by previous training of the enumerators and the vigilance of the checking staff, and partly by adjustment effected in the statistics by adjusting the crude figures

A/69 married. Census 1,711,000 persons were unmarried, 1,611,333 married, and 107,611 widowed which gives a proportion of roughly 47 per cent. unmarried, 44 per cent. married and 3 per cent. widowed in both the sexes. As regards the separate proportions of the sexes the subjoined table gives the necessary statistics by absolute figures as well as shows the proportions per 1,000 of the sex concerned, by civil condition. The accompanying diagram shows the civil condition by age-periods in absolute figures.

A/62 CIVIL CONDITION FOR ALL AGES AND RELIGIONS IN THE STATE.

[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	
Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1000,000	1000,000	1000,000	1000,000	1000,000
Proportion per thousand ...		000	000	000	000	00	00

A/62 The apparent results from the proportionate figures show that there are more unmarried males than females while in the married state the proportion
595 per 1,000 is greater (488) for the females than the males (412). It clearly leads to the inference that the statistics of our State are not liable to the charge which Sir Philip Hartog has levelled against the All India Census namely that the excess of 600,000 married males over married females goes to indicate that in India polyandry is being practised at an increasing rate. We are quite sure that the charge of Sir Philip Hartog against the Census of India which has received such wide publicity in the Indian Press will soon be satisfactorily explained by the Census authorities of India but for our part we have simply to point out that the excess of 35,387 married females is sufficient proof of the correctness of our statistics of married conditions and of the fact that polygamy is in vogue to a greater extent than polyandry, in spite of the fact that polyandry is actually practised on a universal scale among the Khokhars whose proportion to the total population is, however, too negligible (1 per cent.) to affect the proportion of the polygamous communities (the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs) and thus to produce a sufficient surplus so to give an excess of married males. With this brief survey of the main statistics we proceed to discuss each of the three special features of the civil condition in the light of the statistics collected in the State.

581 **148. Universality of Marriage.**—There are four principal religious communities inhabiting the State—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Shikhan. The Christians and Zoroastrians though not completely absent constitute a very small proportion of the State population. Without entering into the discussion details of the various kinds of marriages recognised by the personal laws of the various communities or dilating upon the customs and ceremonies which form the indispensable adjuncts of matrimony we proceed to examine briefly the attitude and outlook of each community towards marriage and shall pass on to describe the universality of marriage in India. Amongst the Hindus and also among the Jains the marriage is a sacred duty enjoined by the scriptures which must be performed by every Hindu. The following quotation from Mr. P. K. Wattal's "Population problem in India" shows the compelling and obligatory character of the Hindu injunctions on the subject of marriage, which is at the root of the universality of marriage amongst the Hindus.

"Everybody marries. He or she and however a parent or the spiritual guardian can be punished by [illegible]. For a Hindu marriage is a sacrament which owes its spiritual significance of the desire of the parties to bear the responsibilities of a married existence. A Hindu male must marry—and have children—even if you choose to [illegible] from the desired ones but the right thereto remains. It is the performance of the sacrificial rites and duties of one 'Dharma' which one who owns his father's and from the last sacrificial 'Dharma'. A Hindu widow, remarried or [illegible], is a source of social disgrace to her family and of damnation to her departed".

A [illegible] of category [illegible] 329-330 for corrections -- Asst/1/47]

581 Amongst the Muslims "marriage is primarily a civil contract consisting of necessary formalities of a proposal and acceptance before witnesses to establish the marital agreement". The Sheikhs of the State also regard it as the result of a contract terms whereof are generally recorded in a document which contains a stipulation that the brothers of the bridegroom, who can share the wife in common with their eldest brother will not separate and that all the property of the joint family shall be inherited by the children of the woman being married. Both amongst the Muslims and the Sheikhs divorce is permissible, but it is not very commonly practised. The Sikhs' outlook towards marriage although much after the Hindu fashion is nevertheless more liberal.

596 The universality of marriage is therefore an accepted fact in India springing from religious sanctions in the case of Hindus including Jains and partly religious and partly economic motives in the case of the Muslims who are also influenced by the example of the Hindus. The joint family system further strengthens the state of wedlock since the family resources are available for the support of the married couple irrespective of their capacity to support themselves and undertake the burdens and responsibilities of married life. The institution rules out the prudential considerations which compel postponement of marriage in European countries. Such economic considerations instead of operating as a check on marriage or helping to postponement, on the other hand constitute a potent factor in promoting matrimony since the wife is necessary to run the household and materially helps the agriculturist husband in outdoor work as well. The prevalence of illiteracy does not allow the married couple to be thoughtful of the future and consequently progression goes on indiscriminately compelling the parents to send children for work at an early age to supplement their meagre income and enable the family to drag on their wealthy existence at a low standard of life.

[illegible]162 From the Subsidiary Table I we find that in the age-group 20-40 there are 717 married males, 283 married females per 1,000 of each sex under the head 'All Religions' which shows that at these ages 717 per cent. of the male population is married, 20 per cent. unmarried and 8 per cent. widowed; while amongst the females in the age-group 40 per cent. are married, only 2 per cent. unmarried and 7.5 per cent. widowed. Making due allowance for the beggars (who number several lacs in India) religious devotees (who abound as profusely in Sheikhpur monasteries), prostitutes and persons suffering from bodily infirmity or deformity we are left with a very small proportion of people who remain unmarried in this country. The greater proof of the universality of marriage is needed in the face of these statistics. Amongst the females it is obvious that at the age-period 20-40 almost all the females are married 90% per cent. being married and out of the balance of 9% per cent., 7½ per cent. are widows leaving only 1 per cent. unmarried to be accounted for by each of these not as belong to the category of beggars, devotees, prostitutes and the infirm. The figures overwhelmingly prove that between 20 and 40 no women remains without marriage and if there be any such instances they simply constitute exceptions which only go to prove the rule.

[illegible]0 Marriage is essential for the healthy progress of society and any artificial barriers raised in the way of natural instinct is productive of serious social evils. The Census of England and Wales held in 1921 disclosed the following proportion of people in the different civil conditions which shows the difference:—

Civil Condition	Persons per 10,000	Females	Persons per 10,000	Females
	1921	1921	1921	1921
	Males		Females	
	Per cent.		Per cent.	
Married	48	48½	48½	48½
Single	46	43½	43½	43½
Widowed	6	8½	8½	8½

* Females: read 'Per' of estate sheet, p. 330, re-typed 116 — Analyst]